

For Immediate Release
February 16, 2001
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PRESS RELEASE

Lexington, KY - The Agricultural Development Board, chaired by Governor Paul Patton, approved today a statewide model for a Genetic Improvement Cost-share Program in the Commonwealth. The program aims to increase the overall quality of the state's beef and dairy herds through a number of different mechanisms that will demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of greater producer investments in the genetic stock of bulls and semen used in breeding throughout the state.

The program requires a veterinarian administered Breeding Soundness Evaluation and certification that a particular animal ranks in at least the top 50% of their breed. This level of commitment and investment by both producers and the Agricultural Development Board represents a serious effort to increase net farm income in one of Kentucky's largest and most important agricultural sectors. The program represents a huge step forward in creating even larger opportunities to add value to Kentucky's beef cattle by setting the stage for future marketing initiatives.

Producer groups will administer the model program at the county level, accepting, certifying genetics and processing applications from individual farmers who wish to participate. The program will be offered to County Agricultural Development Councils as a model for those counties wishing to invest in cattle genetics improvement. Interested county councils will determine the level of funding to be applied toward such a program, and identify a local entity to provide administrative support.

The funds used to cost-share on the purchase of improved genetics will come from the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund, created by House Bill 611 in the 2000 General Assembly. The money in this investment fund comes from agriculture's share of the state's receipts from the National tobacco settlement agreement. This program represents the board's first effort to extend financial support to farmers for facilitating long-term enhancement of Kentucky's agricultural economy and replacement of income lost from reductions in tobacco quota.